



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE TONI E. WALKER
93rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING ROOM 2700
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

CAPITOL: 860-240-8585
TOLL FREE: 800-842-8267
FAX: 860-240-0027
E-MAIL: Toni.Walker@cga.ct.gov

CHAIRMAN
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

March 3, 2014

Testimony In Favor of:

**H.B. 5062- AN ACT CONCERNING THE REMOVAL OF INDIVIDUALS FROM THE
STATE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REGISTRY**

Dear Judiciary Committee Legislators:

I am asking for your support of this very important piece of legislation. The registry was originally created for the safety and well-being of our State's children; however, ***it is being used in a more harmful capacity to those individuals listed on the registry.***

The Abuse and Neglect Registry is a maintained child abuse and neglect registry by the CT Department of Children and Families that holds the names of individuals against whom DCF has investigated and subsequently substantiated child abuse or neglect charges on. If listed on the Registry, an individual is forbidden from working with or interacting with children.

Although this Registry seems beneficial on its surface, ***the law currently does not allow names to be removed from the registry once all appeals have been exhausted or waived.*** This means that an individual who has been wrongfully listed on the registry is continuously punished for the rest of his/her life....or until we remedy this issue.

A parent wrongfully registered is no longer able to engage in roles that other parents may have, such as being a chaperone on a school trip or even being allowed to enter their children's school. This registry was developed to protect and better the lives of our children, not limit interaction between a parent and child -- detrimentally affecting the lives of both.

Furthermore, ***there have been several pertinent instances that it appears DCF has utilized this Registry as a means of punishment for former employees who have been terminated from the agency.*** State employees who have been terminated for not properly fulfilling their job are being placed on the registry,

despite the arbitrator recognizing that the employee should be able to return to work in the Appeals process. Although the Appeals process may be in favor of the ex-employee, DCF has taken the opportunity to register these individuals as abusive and neglectful in order to prevent any future employment with the State and/or children.

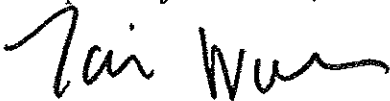
As of present, there are currently five cases in which an individual was terminated from DCF and has been **questionably** placed on the registry. A constituent of mine provided me with a specific example of this. This individual was terminated by DCF because he stepped away from his post at a group home to get water from the cooler during which a fight broke out. His termination may have been justified; however he was placed on the registry and he will never be able to work with children again. ***Isn't termination punishment enough?***

We need to create a process to allow individuals to remove their names from the DCF Abuse and Neglect Registry. Not only are there incredible negative ramifications of wrongful registration and also questionable registrations by DCF of former employees, there is a very large societal and cultural implications. Some individuals have found themselves on the Registry as a result of spanking their child. Spanking may be considered abusive; however, one must realize that methods of parenting can be attributed to cultural norms that have been taught and passed down generationally in their families. That individual should not be stripped away from employment for the rest of his/her life. ***There is a population in Connecticut that depends on child care and such services as a means of living and may have no other experience or background for any other kind of employment.***

The registry should be solely used to protect children and not as a manner of a termination reprimand. It should not be misused. This testimony is not written to undermine the registry. It is great that there is a system in place to protect children; however, there needs to be a focus on rehabilitating rather than continuously punishing. Individuals should have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes in order to become better citizens for our State. ***We need to give people the chance to better themselves.***

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,



Toni Walker
House Chair of Appropriations
District 93 - New Haven